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Curbing crises

Continued from page 22

Maybe you've lost a spouse through divorce, or a parent has recently died. Perhaps your drinking or overeating is causing family or work problems? Or you're unemployed and trying to feed and clothe a family.

UNHAPPINESS, stress and compulsive behavior are present in every season, say experts. But they may seem especially painful during holiday periods when happiness is supposed to be the norm.

But a variety of non-profit groups are around to help out.

For example, most communities have groups such as the Goodfellows, Jaycees and FISH, which distribute canned goods and other foodstuffs, and clothing.

An emergency meal can be eaten at the Capuchin Community Center, at 1760 Mt. Elliott in Detroit. Meals are served to adults from 11 a.m.-1 p.m. Monday through Saturday.

But what about the battle to overcome depression and problems with coping? Help abounds — ranging from crisis-intervention groups to Alcoholics Anonymous and Overeaters Anonymous.

Listening to persons with varied mental and emotional problems are the Suicide Prevention and Drug Information Center in Detroit, and Common Ground in Birmingham.

WORKERS who staff the 24-hour crisis lines at both agencies face the immediate task of helping the troubled client see that help is available. Trained to be good listeners, the workers let the client define his or her problem and then to "problem solve," said Dian Wilkins of the Detroit center.

Often, referrals will be made to other agencies. For example, Ms. Wilkins said the Suicide Prevention and Drug Information Center has a list of 350 resources for persons with problems.

"There are a lot of factors (in depression)," Ms. Wilkins said. "Around holidays and right after, there seems to be some increase (in calls)."

"It's hard to separate out," she added. "We get calls all the time."

Ms. Wilkins said much of the holiday depression can be laid at the door of unmet expectations. Other causes are loneliness and "just plain old economics."

"When people were very young, everything was done for them," said Ms. Wilkins. "It was a time of happiness, food and presents. We carry with us those expectations — that this should be a time of joy and togetherness."

The Wayne County agency uses the telephone number 224-7000 for its 24-hour hotline. The number for Common Ground in Oakland County is 645-9676.

HOLIDAYS may be an especially difficult time for an alcoholic, says "Shirley," a staff person with Alcoholics Anonymous.

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